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Open-Response Questions in the Classroom

Kentucky Department of Education

Division of Curriculum and Assessment Development

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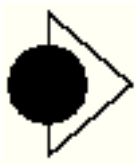
How to Use this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to help you develop and incorporate open-response questions into your classroom instruction. The planning guide will take you through the basic steps of development.



Begin by carefully examining the planning guide. It outlines the basic steps and considerations for developing open-response questions. After you have become familiar with the planning guide, you will also find

***in-depth information about each development stage,**
***templates to assist in designing questions and scoring guides,**
***reproducible information for students, and**
***a reference guide to additional helpful information**

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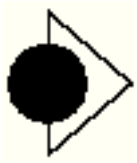
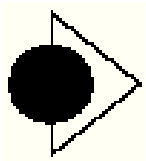


As you read this manual, SUCCESS HINTS or critical information will be marked by this symbol.

Welcome to Open-Response Question Planning Guide

Open-response questions are an essential part of a performance-based assessment program. As the hallmark of a "thinking" curriculum, they encourage students to integrate and apply knowledge and skills to a variety of situations.



Open-response questions require students to combine content knowledge and application of process skills in order to communicate an answer.

They may:

***have a correct answer which students can determine and explain through a variety of methods or in varying degrees of correctness;**
***have multiple successful answers for which students must apply their analytical skills to a response; or**
***combine requirements: one part requires a student to provide a single correct answer and a subsequent part asks the student to extend his/her knowledge in another way, such as applying the knowledge to another situation or by predicting an outcome.**

"Open-response questions require students to combine content knowledge and application of process skills in order to communicate an answer."

For all open-response questions, content is the foundation of student answers. Students must demonstrate content knowledge in order to successfully support their answers to communicate clearly what they know and are able to do.

Assessments of this type are not reserved solely for state-wide testing programs like the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), however, but are also effective in the classroom. There, they provide the benefit of encouraging and rewarding thoughtful responses with the added opportunity of preparing students for assessment accountability.

While open-response questions have many similar characteristics for both KIRIS and classroom use, there are some differences. Both designs should focus on academic expectations and core content as well as having high interest for students. They should both use simple, concrete directions in age-appropriate language. Classroom open-response questions fall within a unit of study with its design and purposes in mind for a particular group of students. KIRIS questions are designed to be appropriate for all Kentucky students at accountability grade levels and therefore must be sensitive to their needs. The graphic, Comparing Open-Response Questions for KIRIS and Classroom Use, represents both the similarities and differences of the two applications.

The use of open-response questions can require extra work on the part of both the teacher and student; however, they produce many dividends.

> *Because they are tied to factual knowledge and curriculum objectives as well as application of skills, they*
> ***provide richer diagnostic information about student achievement.***
>
> *Using open-response questions also helps students to*
> ***gain insights into the processes of learning.***

This manual is designed to provide the classroom teacher with a basic road map for designing effective open-response questions that will be an essential, manageable part of instruction, rather than an added unit. It should assist teachers in preparing their students to develop skills that will help them be productive citizens as well as to perform well on various assessments.

The Open-Response Question Planning Guide will take you through the steps of Planning the Question, Writing the Question, and Developing a Scoring Guide. Each section of the planning guide is essential to development of relevant open-response questions designed to be incorporated within your classroom instruction.

OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION PLANNING GUIDE

PLANNING THE QUESTION

Essential Question	Academic Expectation(s)	Core Content for Assessment	Real-Life Context
Review your unit planning map to identify these targeted components for a single question.			

WRITING THE QUESTION

Situation:

*Can I construct a specific situation with which my students will identify and understand?
*Is the situation age-appropriate?
*Are all necessary prompts such as maps, charts, and graphs present and readable?

Directions:

*What specifically do I want my students to know and be able to do with this situation?
*Which question type will be most useful for this situation?
*Which Bloom's Taxonomy verb matches my objective?
*Is the language both age and grade-level appropriate?
*Are the directions simple, direct, and concise?
*Are these directions compatible with my purpose?

DEVELOPING A SCORING GUIDE

*What do I expect a top-level response to contain?
*Can I write a model of a top-level response?
*Is my guide compatible with the targeted academic expectations, core content, and classroom objectives?
*Can I limit the scoring guide to evaluate only what I asked for in the question?
*Do I use the same language to describe responses as the question does?
*How should each level of student response be described?

Planning the Question

Open-response questions should be included within the unit of study as an assessment of the content and skills of that unit and not as isolated activities. While they are not as comprehensive as culminating performances, the questions should be designed to integrate the selected activities, purposes, and materials in the unit. Because of their placement within the unit, the questions should be constructed with special considerations in mind.

OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION PLANNING GUIDE

Essential Question	Academic Expectation(s)	Core Content for Assessment	Real-Life Context

Review your unit planning map to identify your targeted components for this single question.

WRITING THE QUESTION

Situation:

*Can I construct a specific situation that my students will understand and identify with?
*Is the situation age-appropriate?
*Are all necessary prompts such as maps, charts and graphs present and readable?

Directions:

*What specifically do I want my students to know and be able to do with this situation?
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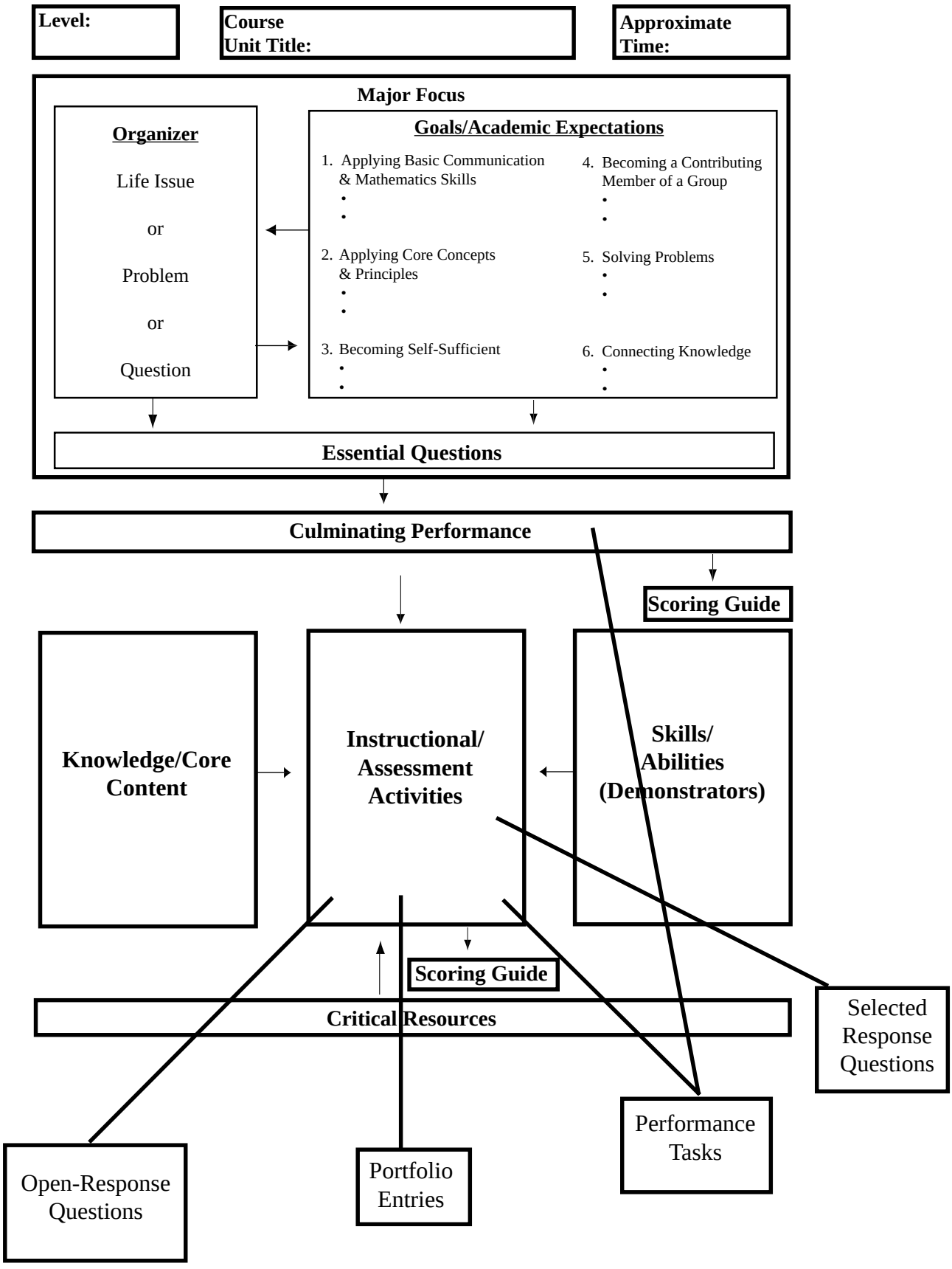
As you look at the Open-Response Question Planning Guide, you will notice that the first section seems different from the other sections. This section is not specifically developed in the open-response question guide because it addresses planning that would have been completed previously through the development of a unit of study. Thus, the considerations in section one for planning the question must be completed before the question is designed. They are reflections of good unit of study planning and should simply be transferred from the unit of study curriculum planning map to the open-response question planning guide.

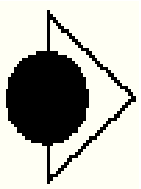
The unit of study development guide on the next page demonstrates how these components fit together.

Embedding Assessment Within Unit of Study



"Open-response questions should measure what is being taught. They should be a reflection of a classroom curriculum that is aligned with school, district, and state expectations."

Open-response questions should measure what is being taught. They should be a reflection of a classroom curriculum that is aligned with school, district, and state expectations. They should not be isolated instruction in and of themselves, as in a unit on how to answer open-response questions. An open-response question should focus on the "big ideas", the important skills and concepts of a particular unit of study. It should allow students to demonstrate their content knowledge and application of skills.



In constructing the question, ask yourself the following questions:

"What is the purpose for asking this question?"
"Is what I want my students to have learned from this unit reflected in this question?"
"Is this an important application of the focus of this unit?"
"What content is necessary to answer this question?"
"What skill(s) should my students demonstrate in answering this question?"

Writing the Question

OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION PLANNING GUIDE

Essential Question	Academic Expectation(s)	Core Content for Assessment	Real-Life Context

Review your unit planning map to identify your targeted components for this single question.

Situation:

WRITING THE QUESTION

*Can I construct a specific situation that my students will understand and identify with?
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*Are all necessary prompts such as maps, charts and graphs present and readable?

Directions:

***What specifically do I want my students to know and be able to do with this situation?**
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"Because the ultimate goal is to measure what students know and what they can do with that knowledge, it is important that both the instruction and the question target the application of skills and content."

Once you have determined the purpose of the question and how it fits within the unit of study, it is important that the actual question reliably measure what you want to evaluate. Because the ultimate goal is to measure what students know and *what they can do with that knowledge*, it is important that both the instruction and the question target the application of skills and content.

Open-response questions are effective for applying content within a real-life context. For example, a geometric principle may be applied to determine the amount of fencing needed for a field. Practical reading may be addressed in recipes or directions. Not only does placing a question in a real-life application help evaluate the depth of knowledge, it helps students "enter" a question by increasing their interest. When students are actively engaged, they tend to produce more accurate and complete answers and, therefore, higher scores.

To further explain, an open-response question will not ask students to restate the quadratic formula, but rather will set up a situation in which they must apply that formula. A student should not be asked to simply identify the main characters of a selection, but to apply their knowledge of the characters to compare them, predict future actions, or analyze their function within a piece of literature. In science, a student will not be asked to simply memorize information about the position of an element on the Periodic Table of the Elements, but will be expected to use the chart to explain patterns related to atomic size, atomic mass, or families of elements.

The actual writing of the question can be divided into two portions: **establishing a situation** and **designing directions.**

Each of these is further explained in the following sections.

Establish the Situation

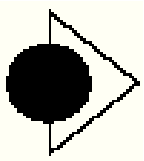
Start writing the question by establishing the situation for the question. This is the prompt or entry into the question. It should prepare the student to answer the specific question by creating interest and providing background information. You will connect the context or real-life application from the unit of study to this question. The situation may include a reading passage or graphic such as a map, chart, or diagram. It may also contain an entry statement to allow students to identify with the question and provide motivation to answer. This is not a rhetorical question, but rather the "hook."

The prompt "should prepare the student to answer the specific question by creating interest and providing background information. You will connect the context or real-life application from the unit of study to this question."

Sample entry statements:
John is in a class that is studying microscopic animal life in a creek and pond located near his school.

The above advertisement is targeted to a particular audience. (The advertisement would be directly above this statement.)

Children often like to play games which use pieces of different shapes and colors.



Open response questions invite students by:
•*Using entry statements to catch interest*
•*Incorporating situations of interest to the students*
•*Providing reading passages, if used, that are interesting*
•*Offering appropriate, graphics that are clear and readable*

Design the Directions

"It is important that the question is clear and concise so that students know exactly what is expected of them."

Once the situation has been established, you must write the student directions. It is important that the question is clear and concise so that students know exactly what is expected of them.

1. First, choose the most appropriate question type for the specific focus of the question. There are five basic structures, each of which has distinct characteristics and uses. Further definitions and examples of each of the following types are in the section Question Types.

•**Scaffolded Questions** have multiple parts, with each question or direction the student is to address presented and labeled separately (e.g., A, B, C). The order is arranged so that successive questions depend upon the response to the previous question. Often, each part becomes increasingly more difficult or complex.

"In the story you have just read, Kelly is a complex character.

A. What traits does she have?

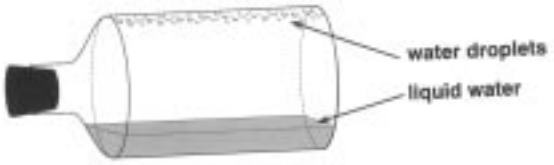
B. How do those traits affect the people around her?"

•**Single Dimension/Component** forms ask a straight-forward question which requires explanation, examples, description, or evidence as support.

"As the United States became increasingly industrialized, many aspects of American life improved. However, new problems also arose. Explain how the growth of industry led to social and economic problems."

•**Two or More Relatively Independent Components** are signaled by A, B, C parts. The parts may be about the same prompt but have little relation to each other in that a correct response to one question is not dependent upon the response to the other questions.

The picture below shows a large, sealed, glass bottle. The bottle had some water in it and was left on a warm surface. This bottle is a model of the water cycle.



A. Use what happens in the bottle to explain the water cycle.

B. Tell what would be different on Earth if water did not go through the changes that are happening in the bottle. Include two or more differences in your answer.

•**Student Choice** with provided topics or options which force students to choose from the selections. They offer students more opportunities to demonstrate their individual learning, but may provide more scoring difficulty because there are many more "correct" answers.

Suppose you have a friend who wants to learn the proper way to strike a ball for one of the following:

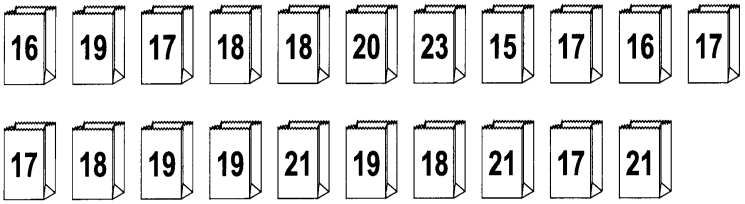
1. *Softball*
2. *Golf*
3. *Tennis*
4. *Baseball*

Select one of these activities and describe the steps for preparing, striking, and ending a proper swing.

•**Response to Provided Information**, such as data, readings, or graphics. Students must be able to manipulate raw materials in order to respond to specific questions.

Bags of Candies

The fourth-graders in Ms. Chung's class bought some candies that come in small bags. Each student in the class reported how many candies were in his or her bag. Here are the numbers the students reported.



A. Make a graph, a table, or an organized list that shows the data above.

B. Ms. Chung also bought a small bag of candies from the same place. Based on the numbers of candies in the students' bags, how many candies do you think are in her bag? Explain why you think that.

(2) Second, choose the level of thinking you want to be reflected in this question. Bloom's Taxonomy verbs reflect levels from recall to synthesis and evaluation. Many open-response questions ask students to use the skills of application or analysis. Choose a verb to reflect the thinking skill you want to assess. A question is clearer when it uses a single verb or, at least, a single verb for each part of the question. For example:

"Imagine that you are a tomb builder for a Pharoah.
***A. Describe** how tombs are robbed.*
***B. Design** your plan for protecting the tomb that you are going to build.*

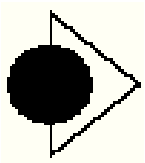
You may also want to choose verbs that appeal to multiple intelligences to give all students a greater chance to excel by responding through a strength area. Students who have high spatial intelligence, for instance, may respond well to graphing or outlining questions, while students with strong verbal/linguistic capabilities favor discussion or explanation formats.

3 Third, carefully define what you want students to answer.

- Make sure you are clear on both quality and quantity indicators. Do not ask for "several" reasons, specify the number.
- Use simple and direct language. You are evaluating what students know rather than whether they can figure out what you are asking.
- You also need to use language that is both age and grade-level appropriate.

"Above all, make sure that you are specifically asking the question you want your students to answer."

Above all, make sure that you are specifically asking the question you want your students to answer. Be careful to phrase the question so that there are no impediments to their answering the question to the best of their abilities. Communicate clearly to enhance student effectiveness.



Evaluate the effectiveness of your directions by asking yourself:

- *Will my students know exactly what I am asking them to do?*
- *Is this the most effective way to phrase this question?*
- *Have I used the best verb?*
- *Is the question specific in quantities needed for a quality response?*
- *Is the language appropriate for my students?*

Developing a Scoring Guide

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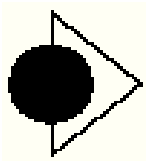
***How should each level of student response be described?**

Scoring guides are sets of criteria which describe the characteristics of responses at each identified level. They provide the tool necessary to accurately and fairly evaluate student success for each individual question.

Though scoring guides are developed following the actual writing of the question, they should be written prior to administering an open-response question to students. Sometimes, writing the scoring guide will indicate problems with the way the question is worded which, then, should lead to appropriate revision. The scoring will also help ensure that the question is rich enough to support various levels of student responses.

Each scoring guide should follow certain guidelines. Guides should:



- Include a clear explanation of what is expected in a quality student response.
- Define the various levels of possible student responses and place a value on each level. Descriptors should explain each of the ways a student response may qualify for a score point.
- Enable scoring to be unbiased, consistent, and accurate. The scoring guide should provide a scorer (teacher) with the details necessary to score a response accurately and fairly.
- Use simple straight-forward language and repeat significant descriptive words used in the question.
- Ensure that what is required for a top-level response is clearly indicated in the open-response question.

The Kentucky General Scoring Guide is a good pattern to follow when developing your own scoring guides. It utilizes four performance levels which are clearly outlined to suit any question or situation.

"Scoring guides are sets of criteria which describe the characteristics of responses at each identified level.

Though scoring guides are developed following the writing of the question, they should be written prior to administering an open-response question to students."

For classroom use of open-response questions, you may need to make additional decisions about a scoring guide. One of the first decisions is how many performance levels to use. While the Kentucky General Scoring Guide uses four levels, you may decide to use more or fewer levels depending upon the question. The number of levels will be dictated by how narrow you want to define the characteristics of a response level. The key is to make certain that the scoring guide addresses the needs and goals of your classroom.

As you develop the scoring guide, there are a number of steps to take. All of these procedures should take place side-by-side with the open-response question. Since the guide is the yardstick used to measure student performance on a single question, the question becomes the grounding element for construction of the guide. All of the considerations for planning the question (academic expectations, core content, real-life context, and essential question) must remain consistent with the scoring guide, as well.

Establishing the parameters

The first step in designing the scoring guide is to determine what you want a top-level response to say. In other words, what is the right or best answer? You will need to actually solve the problem, locate the cities on the map, or write the musical notation. It will be helpful to separate the description of each part into its designation (e.g., A,B,C). This is the CONTENT of the response.

Next, re-visit the verbs you included in the question. If you asked students to analyze, what do you expect? In this question, what does it mean to explain? Identify the PROCESS you expect the students to use.

Third, how do you expect students to demonstrate their knowledge and methodology? For instance, should students make a chart, list, diagram, or graph? This is the COMMUNICATION format for the response.

How good is good enough?

The starting point for defining student performance is with the top standard. This is the level in which students completely and thoroughly answer the question. You should be able to identify the appropriate **content**, **process**, and **communication** for each open-response question as you define a top-level response. Your description of a quality response will characterize an answer that demonstrates excellence in each of these three characteristics. For example:

> *Question: "Four accident victims are described at the beginning of this article. Choose any two of the victims. Use examples from the article to describe how you would treat each victim you choose.*
>
> *Score Point 4: Student selects and thoroughly describes some of the most appropriate treatments with examples from the article for two victims based on their injuries.*

"You should be able to identify the appropriate content, process, and communication for each open-response question as you define a top-level response. Your description of a quality response will characterize an answer that demonstrates quality in each of these three characteristics."

In this example, notice that the guide matches both the question and the quality indicators that are typical of a level four response on the Kentucky General Scoring Guide. For a top-level response to this question, the student must choose two victims and describe appropriate treatments for each one. "Thoroughly" and "appropriate" are characteristics of a high-level response. The **content** is the indicated treatment; the **process** is matching appropriate treatment with the victim; and the **communication** will be the description with examples, probably in paragraphs. While a chart or bulleted list may answer key points, the description cannot be as thorough as in paragraph format.

In the example, the scoring guide description of the performance levels does not include treatments for the specific injuries. The performance levels are defined based on quality rather than specific content. That content, however, may be listed on the scoring guide in a facts or knowledge section so that it may be referenced for all performance levels.

Once you have written the description of the top performance level, you will need to attempt to write a response at that level. If you cannot easily write a response of that quality, then you are probably expecting too much of your students. At this point, you may need to revise the question and/or the scoring guide to express realistic expectations for your students.

Following the definition of the top-level response, you will then write descriptions of each of the other levels. While there is no perfect formula for distinctions between levels, there should be appropriate and sequential differences between levels. A good scoring guide helps make the scorer's task easier by clearly stating the differences between levels in discernible and important ways.

•Sometimes these distinctions will include quantity indicators. For instance, if the question asked for three examples, a response with two well-defined examples might receive a score of three if you are using a four-level scoring guide. Simple numerical indicators should not be the only difference between levels; quality of work must also be considered. If you are using a four-level guide, certain common language may describe each level.

*The top or four level of a scoring guide may typically characterize responses as effective, thorough, complete, successful, insightful, in-depth, efficient, and/or sophisticated.

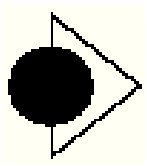
*A level three response or second highest level will usually use terms such as adequate, satisfactory, understanding of *major* concepts, complete *most*, and/or clear.

*A response of level two or third highest level quality will often be described as having gaps or leaps, incomplete, *some* important points, demonstrate basic understanding, and/or *some* errors.

*Responses receiving the lowest level or a one are typically labeled as minimal, completes *only* small part, *little* understanding, not logical, unclear, and/or *major* errors.

"A good scoring guide helps make the scorer's task easier by clearly stating the differences between levels in discernible and important ways."

Finally, review your scoring guide to confirm that it is consistent with the question, the core content, academic expectations, real-life context, and essential question that you have already identified. As the final piece in the process, evaluation of the scoring guide will help you determine whether you have successfully completed the process of developing an open-response question.



As you design your scoring guide, remember to ask yourself:

- *What does a top-level response contain?*
- *Can I write a top-level response?*
- *Is my guide consistent with the question, academic expectations, core content, and unit instruction?*
- *Is each level clearly different from other levels?*

Sample Questions

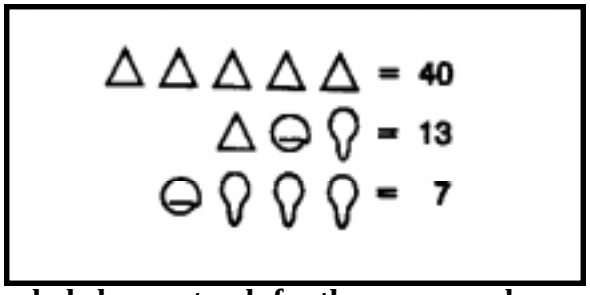
The following examples show several formats for open-response items and the characteristics of those formats.

1. Scaffolded Questions

•sequence of tasks increasingly more difficult/complex
•success on one part would likely mean there was success on all previous parts
•multipart (simple to complex)

For Example:

Emma is reading a funny book about aliens. In the story, aliens come to Earth to visit a school. The aliens show how they write numbers on their planet. Here is what they shared.



Each alien symbol always stands for the same number no matter where the symbol is placed.

A. Figure out what number each of the alien math symbols stands for. Give the numbers and explain the steps you used to figure them out.

B. Write the alien version of the numbers 11, 23, and 37. Use as few alien symbols as you can for each number.

2. Single Dimension/Component

•straight-forward question
•draw a conclusion or take a position, then support it with explanations, examples, evidence
•explain a phenomenon or describe procedures

For Example:

Many of today's composers write music for movies. The music is used to help us understand the characters, their feelings, and what is happening in the movie. The music may make us feel happy, sad, or fearful for the characters.

Think about a cartoon movie you know, such as *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, or *Pocahontas*. Choose a character from the cartoon movie. Use the elements of music (rhythm, pitch, tempo) to explain how the music helped develop and show changes in that character.

3. Two or More Relatively Independent Components

•fairly independent questions addressing the same prompt
•contains multiple parts (A, B, C, etc.)

For Example:

Plays rely on more than just the written word. Use information from the play excerpt you have just read to answer the following questions.

A. Define the conflict and mood in this play.
B. Choose a character and explain how you would use movement to express your interpretation of this character.

4. Student Choice: Topics/Options Provided

•Choose from the provided options

For Example:

Geographic factors can influence the development of a region or a nation. Select two geographic factors from the list below. Discuss how these factors had either a positive or a negative effect on the development of a specific nation other than the United States.

landforms
water and other natural resources
climate
location

5. Response to Provided Information

•Response to provided information such as data, readings, graphics

For Example:

Kiley's cat had a litter of kittens. Kiley did some research and learned the following information about cat genetics:

Hair color in cats	Number of toes on front feet of cats
B (dominant allele) produces black hair b (recessive allele) produces brown hair	T (dominant allele) produces 6 toes t (recessive allele) produces 5 toes

Kiley then examined her cat and the kittens. She produced the data found on the chart below.

Cat	Hair Color	Number of Toes
mother	black	6
kitten #1	black	6
kitten #2	black	6
kitten #3	black	5
kitten #4	black	5
kitten #5	brown	6
kitten #6	brown	6
kitten #7	brown	5
kitten #8	brown	5

Analyze the data recorded by Kiley. Based on this information, what can you tell about the parent cats' genes for hair color and number of toes? Explain how you know this.

Annotated Sample Question

OPEN-RESPONSE QUESTION PLANNING GUIDE

Grade 4: Kentucky Geography

Essential Question	Academic Expectation(s)	Core Content for Assessment	Real-Life Context
These components are identified from the Unit of Study Curriculum Planning Map			
What are the advantages for the cities that are located near big rivers in Kentucky?	**2.19: Students recognize and understand the relationship between people and geography and apply their knowledge in real-life situations.**	***Every place is unique and can be described by its human and physical characteristics. *Physical characteristics of a place include its landform, climate, water, plants, and animals. *The physical environment both promotes and limits human activities (e.g., mountains as barriers or protection, rivers used as boundaries or transportation routes.)**	**Many aspects of local community life are affected by where the community is located. Students should be able to compare communities based on their geographical characteristics.**

WRITING THE QUESTION

Situation:

Many Kentucky cities are located near large rivers.

For a fourth grader, the context or situation is simple. The statement does allow the student to enter the question by stating a simple fact.

Directions:

Describe three important advantages that the rivers provide these cities. Explain why each advantage is important.

These directions use concrete verbs, age-appropriate language, quantitive requirements, and encourage the students to tie content knowledge with higher order thinking skills.

DEVELOP A SCORING GUIDE

The scoring guide matches academic expectations, core content, essential question, and real-life context from the components of the Unit of Study Curriculum Planning Guide. Guide is consistent with the question in language and expectations. A model of a level four response is included.

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
4	Student describes at least three important advantages a river provides and explains in detail why each one is important. Explanations are clear and informed.
3	Student describes at least three important advantages a river provides but explanation of why the advantages are important is weak and lacks detail. OR Student describes two advantages with detailed explanation of why they are important.
2	Student describes two advantages but explanations are weak and lack detail. OR Student describes one advantage and gives a good explanation of why it is important.
1	Student lists advantages; explanations, if included, are unclear or misinformed. OR Student indicates minimal understanding of the benefits of being near a body of water.
0	Response is incorrect or irrelevant.
BLANK	No Response

Possible Student Response

Score 4:

Many Kentucky cities are located near large rivers. Three advantages that the rivers provide the cities are a place to use for entertainment like boating, a large area to fish, and lots of water for communities. Boating is important because it serves as good entertainment and can be a tourist attraction. Fishing is important because it is a great source of food for cities and communities around that river. Lots of water is important because people need drinking water, water for the toilet, water to wash dishes, and water for many, many other things. So you see large rivers are very important for lots of different reasons.

Open-Response Question Planning Guide Template

PLANNING THE QUESTION

Essential Question	Academic Expectation(s)	Core Content for Assessment	Real-Life Context
Review your unit planning map to identify your targeted components for this single question.			

WRITING THE QUESTION

Situation:

Directions:

DEVELOPING A SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Guide Template

UNIT OF STUDY:
ACADEMIC EXPECTATION:

CORE CONTENT:

QUESTION:

SCORE POINT 4	
SCORE POINT 3	
SCORE POINT 2	
SCORE POINT 1	
SCORE POINT 0	No Response or irrelevant

Instructional Strategies

Helping Students Answer Open-Response Questions

The most effective use of open-response questions is in the classroom. Here, they model the kind of thinking that should be encouraged. The use of open-response formats is a mind-set: one in which students are encouraged to use higher-level thinking skills. Therefore, incorporating that type of response must happen frequently and regularly.

Specifically, you can:

**Stress communication.* Continually ask students to explain and to expand their ideas, both in discussion and in written form.

**Give students time* to think and respond. It takes longer to construct a good response than to recite memorized facts. Give students time to reflect on and construct thoughtful answers rather than quick fact recall.

**Use practical contexts* for students to apply their skills. Help students realize the relevancy of what they are learning by directing them to apply the concepts to larger issues or context.

**Use multiple question formats* so that students can develop confidence with different types of open-response questions. As you introduce different types of questions within classroom units, use models on overhead transparancies or chalkboard for discussion of response strategies and successful answers.

**Students should experience success* with the type of thinking used for open-response questions. Teaching students to think at higher levels can be challenging for both you and them. Therefore, begin with questions for which you are certain students know the content and help them use higher-level thinking patterns. Progress from large group to small group to individual responses so that students of all levels can identify and participate in correct answer strategies. More challenging content and process can then be built into units in a logical progression.

**Help students learn to anticipate* how a question will be scored by developing or predicting guides to specific questions. Scoring guides should not be a mystery for students or scorers.

**Evaluate frequently.* While all evaluation does not have to be formal or have grades assigned, help students progress by determining the quality of their own work. Open-response questions do not belong only at the completion of a unit, but should be used for frequent, regular feedback.

**Encourage self-evaluation.* As students begin examining their own answers for evidence of quality, they continue to refine their thinking and communication skills.

Incorporating open-response questioning techniques into your classroom will provide many benefits for both you and your students. It's a challenge, but one that is well worth the effort.

Response Strategies for Success in Open Response Questions

R **READ** the question quickly, then re-read looking for specifics to help you construct your answer.

E Read **EVERYTHING** you are given before starting to answer. Don't just look at the question. Read any introductory statements, charts, diagrams, maps, reading passages, and/or any background information you are given.

S Highlight **SPECIFIC** key words and ideas in the question. Circle or underline the "direction word" or verb in the question. This will tell you what to do with the information: analyze, compare, describe, etc. Make sure you know how to do each one.You can mark in the test booklet, but remember that your answers must be in the response booklet to be scored. You CANNOT use a highlighter only a pencil!

P Make sure you answer each **PART** of the question. Look for signals such as A and B or the word "and." Put a number beside each part to check later if you have done all you were asked to do.

O Quickly **ORGANIZE** your thoughts to answer the question. The provided space should be sufficient for even a level four response. Restating the question is not necessary, but may help you to focus your thoughts. There is no need to write a complete rough draft or end with a conclusion. Each question is designed to be answered in 15 minutes or less.

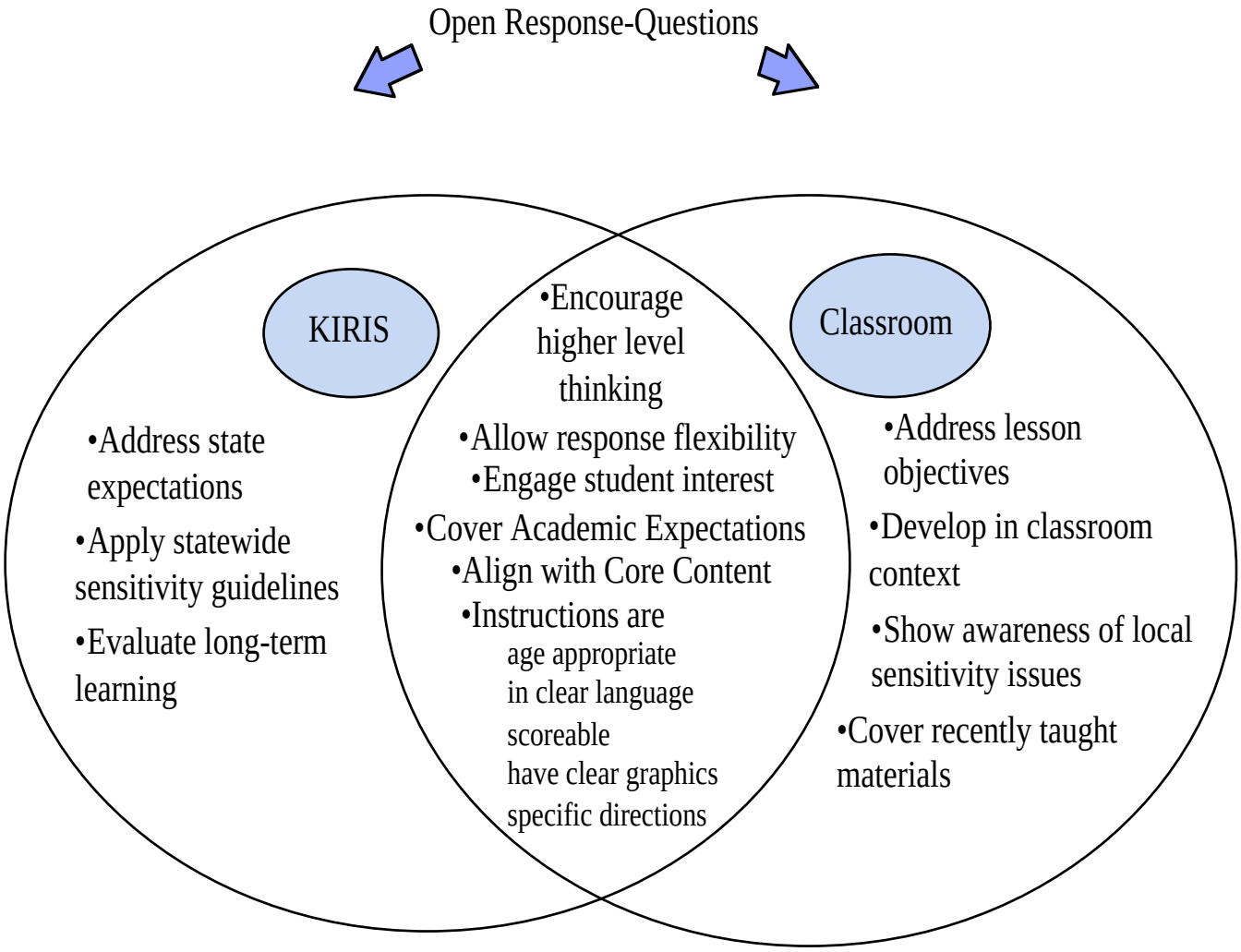
N Make a **NOTE** of any key words or ideas you want to include. Use specific terms when appropriate that show that you know the subject matter. Think like a scorer: what will that person expect you to know and say?

S **SUPPORT** your answer with facts, figures, statements from what is given, or previous information you have. Show any problem-solving steps you take such as calculations, charts, and graphs. Make sure you also explain in correct terms what you have done.

E **EDIT** and revise your answer. Even though spelling and punctuation are not scored, you must make sure the scorers can understand what you mean. If they don't understand, they can't give you credit.

Finally, don't leave out any questions. Give each one your best answer, even if you don't think you know a lot to say.

Comparing Open-Response Questions for KIRIS and Classroom Use



Additional Kentucky Resources

Core Content for Assessment. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of Education, 1996.

Designing an Effective Performance Task for the Classroom. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of Education, 1996.

How to Develop a Standards-Based Unit of Study. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of Education, 1997.

Transformations: Kentucky's Curriculum Framework. Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Department of Education, 1993.

For the latest curriculum and assessment materials, visit the Kentucky Department of Education web site at http://www.kde.state.ky.us